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THE SOCIAL LEGISLATION OF VICHY

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This study sets forth the general characteristics of Vichy Social Legislation and considers especially the administration of public welfare, family welfare, labor legislation, social insurance, public assistance, public housing programs, and special war measures. Important post-liberation problems are enumerated.

31 August 1944

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
I	Introduction: General Characteristics of Vichy Social Legislation	3
II	Administration of Public Welfare	6
	A Health and Welfare Services under the Republic	6
	B Vichy Administration	7
	C Personnel	8
	D Private Welfare Organizations	9
	E Health Standards	10
III	Family Welfare	12
	A Stimulating the Birthrate	12
	B Marriage and the Status of Women	13
	C A Corporative Organization for the Family	14
	D Child Welfare	15
IV	Labor Legislation	18
	A Labor Relations	18
	B The Labor Charter	19
	C Obligatory Labor Service	22
	D Wages and Hours	23
	E Workmen's Compensation	24
	F The Peasant Corporation	24
V	Social Insurance	26
	A Social Insurance under the Third Republic	26
	B Social Insurance under Vichy	28

CONFIDENTIAL

VI Public Assistance . . . . . PAGE 29
A Unemployment Relief 29
B. Old Age Assistance 29
C Free Medical Care 30
VII Public Housing Programs 31
A Housing under the Third Republic 31
B. Housing under Vichy 31
VIII Special War Measures 33
A Ex-Servicemen 33
B. Prisoners of War 34
C. Evacuations 36
IX Conclusion: Post-Liberation Problems 38

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SUMMARY

1. A principal aim of Vichy social welfare legislation has been to increase state control of public and private welfare agencies and personnel. While the health and welfare institutions of the Third Republic were not in themselves basically changed, administration was centralized in the new Secretariat of State for the Family and for Health, private organizations were centralized through the state-supervised Secours National and every effort was made to secure compliant personnel.

2. Assistance to the family, started under the Third Republic, has been developed by Vichy with the object of increasing the birth rate.

3. The aim toward a totalitarian system of control has governed all labor legislation since 1940. The right of free association, characteristic of the Third Republic, was formally eliminated by the corporative system of the Labor Charter and the Peasant Corporation, whereby farmers and workers were organized into single compulsory state-controlled associations. Alienated by these measures, and by unfulfilled promises for increases in wages, and by the relentless demands of the labor draft, French workers have increasingly given their support to the clandestine resistance organized by the old trade unions.

4. Vichy has theoretically widened the scope of social insurance, and liberalized the payment of benefits. Actually these measures attempt to conceal a severe decline in the French standard of living.

The housing problem, persistent since the first World War, has become more acute because Vichy's plans for state-subsidized improvement and construction have never progressed beyond the blueprint stage.

6. The organizations set up for prisoners, ex-servicemen and their families have been primarily propaganda agencies and have been ineffective in their welfare work.

7. It is to be expected that some welfare organizations and welfare personnel instituted by Vichy will be eliminated because of their unpopularity with the French people. Popular opinion, however, may favor the retention of some social benefits introduced but never fully implemented by the Vichy Government.

THE SOCIAL LEGISLATION OF VICHY

I. INTRODUCTION: GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF VICHY SOCIAL LEGISLATION

The social legislation of Vichy has considerably modified the system established under the Third Republic. No longer restrained by a parliamentary system, the Vichy Government has been free to introduce modifications of the old system by government decree. A large number of decrees have been issued, prompted both by the deterioration of the domestic situation, and the desire to "coordinate" social welfare work along fascist lines.

The underlying factors which dictated the character of Vichy social legislation fall into three categories. In the first place, France was in a condition which had no parallel in the history of the Republic. A severe decline in the standard of living resulted from German exactions on the French economy, the loss of the French Empire, and other effects of the war. In the second place, the Vichy Government undertook a policy of collaboration with the Germans, who in the name of collaboration dictated that Vichy policy should be in harmony with the immediate needs of the German war effort, and the more distant plans for a New Order in Europe. In the third place,

the Vichy regime was directed by a group of men ideologically sympathetic to the corporate state and other doctrines more or less closely identified with fascism.

The inevitable clash among the conflicting motives - to salvage as much as possible of French life, to carry out German orders, and to realize the corporative ideal of a "social hierarchy based on work and talent" - has made Vichy social legislation a hodge-podge in which elaborate plans bear no relation to reality, and paternalistic propaganda is contradicted by a policy of suppressing democratic liberties.

On paper Vichy has liberalized the benefits due under various social welfare programs (old age pensions, family allowances, unemployment relief, workmen's compensation, etc.). There is, however, a long step between enacting a program and implementing it, and Vichy has in many instances not been able to translate its programs into reality. Furthermore, the program of relief measures does not reflect a rise in the general standard of living, but, on the contrary, was dictated by the increasing pauperization of the country. The rising cost of living and the decline in real wages since 1939, estimated at 40 percent in 1943,

made an extension of relief measures inevitable. The net result of this decline in the standard of living has been that an increasing proportion of the French population depends on relief measures.

Another general characteristic of Vichy social legislation has been the trend towards increased centralized control. Authoritarian control was part of the Vichy philosophy of government; its extension was also necessitated in order to impose unpopular measures on a recalcitrant population, and to counteract the spread of administrative sabotage, which was crippling government action in all spheres.

Another feature, also characteristic of the fascist form of government, was the trend to exploit the government control over welfare work for propaganda purposes. The most ambitious efforts to evolve a pattern in which welfare work is coordinated into a corporative structure permeated with the official social philosophy were the Labor Charter and the Peasant Corporation. However, all public and private welfare agencies, through government control over key personnel, have in various degrees been forced to become channels for Vichy propaganda.

II. ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC WELFARE

A. Health and Welfare Services

French public health and welfare services have always been closely interrelated. Under the Third Republic, one agency at the top, the Ministry of Public Health, was responsible for both public health and social welfare work. As head of the public welfare services, the Minister of Public Health was advised by a government-appointed Council on Public Assistance; as head of the public health services, he was advised by a Council on Public Hygiene. In each district, one officer, the social assistant, combined the functions of both the social worker and the visiting nurse.

Public health and welfare institutions under the Third Republic were administered through the local communes, the departmental prefect being responsible to the central government for their administration. The Ministry of Health exercised general supervision, sending out inspectors-general to ensure the observance of public regulations. Certain special services fell within the jurisdiction of agencies other than the Ministry of Health; for example, factory

inspection was under the Ministry of Labor, and medical examination of school children under the Ministry of Public Instruction.

B. Vichy Administration

Under Vichy, the administration of public health and welfare agencies has been reorganized. Effective control over all agencies, both public and private, has been centralized in the Secretariat of State for the Family and for Health. For the administration of social welfare and public health services, the country has been divided into twenty regions. A director for each region is appointed by the central government; he regulates all welfare and health work in the region, as well as all personnel. While taking these measures to ensure government control, the Vichy regime has not materially added to or subtracted from the social and medical services established under the Third Republic.

In March 1941, after Marcel Deat had been appointed Minister of Labor and National Solidarity with the object of coercing and cajoling French labor into a more cooperative attitude, a new General Commissariat for Social Assistance was formed and attached to the Ministry of Labor. This change gave the extremist Deat control over a sphere which had

previously been under the less effective Dr. Grasset, the Secretary of State for the Family and for Health. Deat is thus in a position to fill public assistance bodies with men of his own stamp, and to exploit the power of the public assistance purse to bring French labor into line.

C. Personnel

The control over all personnel in public health and welfare work, vested in the regional directors of the Secretariat General for the Family and for Health, was motivated, not by concern for professional standards, but by the desire to institute a political censorship.

The medical profession has suffered particularly under the Vichy regime. All doctors and dentists must belong to a Vichy-created corporative organization, the Order of Doctors. Through regional councils nominated by the government, the Order of Doctors enforces "professional discipline". The Order of Doctors has been extremely unpopular with the medical profession, on account of the strong pro-Vichy bias of its directorate. Many doctors belong to a rival underground organization, the National Committee of Doctors.

There is also an acute shortage of medical personnel. Foreigners and Jews have been excluded

from the profession. In order to supply the German demands for forced labor, Vichy has also restricted the number of medical students. Large numbers of doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and nurses have been sent to Germany.

D. Private Welfare Organizations

The chief innovation introduced by the Vichy regime in the field of private welfare organization has been the expansion of the Secours National as a state-supervised institution. The Secours National, founded during the first World War as a private relief organization to aid civilian victims of the war, was placed under state supervision in 1940, with Petain as its honorary president. The main function of the Secours National has been to coordinate and supervise all private welfare agencies. Its power over these private agencies is based on the fact that it is the only organization entitled to make appeals for public subscriptions or to receive subsidies from the state. For the most part it works through the channels of existing private agencies, to which it distributes funds.

The Secours National is theoretically represented

in every department by a delegate, and in every commune by a correspondent. At every level it is organized into welfare services, which investigate cases and decide on the action to be taken, and administrative services, which execute the decisions of the welfare services. The departmental delegation is also divided into various specialized services, corresponding to the various campaigns emphasized in the work of the Secours National. Among these campaigns are relief to air-raid victims, and to prisoners' families, care of evacuees and refugees, and the establishment of cheap restaurants.

E. Health Standards

Far from being able to fulfill its intention of improving the physical standards of the population, Vichy's measures to protect health have not succeeded in arresting the steady decline of the health of the French people since June 1940. Campaigns, such as those undertaken against venereal diseases and tuberculosis, have not checked an alarming spread of these and other diseases. The increased liability to infection and higher mortality rate are due to:
(1) acute malnutrition in certain strata of the population, particularly the urban lower-income groups;

and (2) the shortage of medical supplies and personnel, which prevents the realization of health schemes, however excellent.

III. FAMILY WELFARE

A. Stimulating the Birth Rate

Since the first World War, France has been acutely concerned about her declining birth rate. This concern stimulated the growth of social legislation to aid the family. Public assistance was given to heads of needy families. In addition, since 1932, it was obligatory for all employers to pay an extra wage, known as a family allowance, to workers supporting children. Marriage loans were provided for young French farmers. Maternity centers and child welfare services were developed.

The Vichy regime has carried this trend farther. It has increased the scale of family allowances and extended their application to unemployed and disabled workers, as well as to workers involved in the compulsory labor program. In addition, it has required employers to pay a further wage-bonus, called the "single wage", to heads of families who are the sole source of income for the family. It has also extended the marriage loans, offered to young agricultural workers under the Third Republic, to all categories of young employees.

Other special advantages given to large families include preferential employment, tax rebates,

reductions in school fees, train fares, and rents, and a special "priority card" which entitles them to first services in public offices and shops.

B. Marriage and the Status of Women

Measures have been taken to make divorce more difficult. Application for divorce may not be made within three years of marriage. The grounds for divorce have been severely restricted.

At the same time the legal status of the wife has been improved. Her consent is now necessary before the husband can dispose of joint property. She may open an independent bank account and may represent her husband in his absence. This improvement in the legal position of women was necessitated by their increased responsibilities while two million Frenchmen have been detained as prisoners or workers in Germany.

On the other hand the Vichy regime, up to the time when its unemployment problem was solved by the program of forced labor for Germany, applied considerable pressure to get women out of employment "back to the home." In the public services hiring of additional married women was forbidden, and those already engaged were

encouraged to retire by offers of increased pensions. In private industry the proportion of women employed was to be kept below a fixed maximum. More recently, German demands for forced labor have resulted in the compulsory mobilization of female workers.

C. A Corporative Organization for the Family

The Vichy regime has made the execution of its family legislation the responsibility of one of the members of the Cabinet, Dr. Grasset, Secretary of State for Health and the Family. He has under him regional delegates for the family who supervise public and private welfare agencies and see that the government's policy is followed.

In addition, Vichy has attempted to organize a movement for the promotion of the family on a local and national scale. The previously existing National Center for the Coordination of Family Movements was given official status and charged with establishing regional and departmental family unions and local family associations, which are open to all parents. The purpose of these family associations is to consult with and advise the public authorities and in general to disseminate the government's directives.

they do not appear to be either lively or effective organizations.

D. Child Welfare

Under the Third Republic, the scope of child welfare legislation was limited to the following general objectives: (1) to provide for abandoned children; (2) to correct delinquent children; and (3) to regulate child labor.

Orphans and ill-treated or abandoned children became wards of the State, with the departmental prefect as their guardian. They were provided for either in state-supported orphanages, or, more often, they were placed with foster-parents under State supervision. To prevent abandonment of children, an allowance was paid to mothers if the father was dead or did not contribute to the support of the child. There were also homes for unmarried mothers and those deserted by their husbands.

Delinquent children were handled by special juvenile courts, which either left them under the guardianship of their own families under the supervision of a social worker, or placed them in state institutions or with foster-parents.

The employment of child labor in most types of work was limited to those over fourteen years of age. Employment of minors under eighteen was subject to regulations of working conditions and provisions for compulsory medical inspections in certain industries.

In a law published in April 1943, Vichy introduced some reforms in the provisions for illegitimate and abandoned children. It was decreed that child centers and homes for expectant mothers were to be established in every department. At these homes mothers were offered instructions in domestic science and paid employment in the neighborhood; children were promised financial help until they left school.

In 1943 it was officially announced by Vichy that there were 300,000 children in France who were subnormal or in moral danger. To cope with this grave situation, the Secretariat of State for Health and the Family established a Technical Council for Deficient Children, with medical and social worker personnel under it, as well as child guidance clinics and re-education centers on a regional and departmental

basis. Compulsory medical examination of school children was instituted.

In view of the shortage of trained personnel, medical supplies and building materials, it is doubtful if these child welfare projects have been effectively implemented.

IV. LABOR LEGISLATION

A. Labor Relations

One of the essential features of French democracy under the Third Republic was the right of free association. Business companies, professional associations, trade unions and societies of all sorts conducted their affairs with the minimum of state regulation. Social conditions in France were to a large extent determined by the activities of these associations; their pressure was responsible for much social legislation; in many cases they carried on social welfare work. Labor unions and associations representing management were free to promote competing social policies and to settle their difference through negotiation or through strikes and look-outs.

In the period of social unrest and wartime emergency preceding the Vichy regime, measures of state control over labor relations had been introduced. From the beginning, the leaders of the Vichy regime have striven to expand this trend and to replace permanently freedom of association by a totalitarian system of state control.

A law of 16 August 1940 (see Journal Officiel, 18 August 1940) abolished the national centers of the main associations representing both the workers

and the employers, such as the Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT), the Confederation Francaise des Travailleurs Chretiens (CGTC), and the Confederation Generale du Patronat Francaise (CGPF). The Government was further empowered to dissolve by decree (and not, as under the Third Republic, through judiciary condemnation) any organization whose activities were judged harmful. At the same time the law provided that government-appointed Organization Committees should temporarily direct the various branches of economic activity, and should settle all questions of social and economic policy in their respective fields. Although local trade unions continued to exist, no role whatsoever was left for them in determining labor conditions.

The resentment of the trade unions at seeing their functions taken over by the government-appointed Organization Committees was aggravated by the fact that the government appointees to whom the controlling power was given were almost exclusively recruited from representatives of big business interests.

B. The Labor Charter

The trend toward state-control culminated in the promulgation of the "Labor Charter" of 4 October 1941 (see Journal Officiel, 26 October 1941. The Labor Charter was an ambitious attempt to outline a new system of labor relations, inspired primarily by the

corporative authoritarian regimes of Portugal, Spain and Italy.

The various existing trade union locals, of which there were often more than one in the same field, were to be replaced by a single union in each field. Voluntary adherence to the union of the worker's choice was to be replaced by compulsory membership in the single union. The Labor Charter also radically limited the function of all trade unions. Strikes (as well as lock-outs) were forbidden; the unions were barred from political or religious activity, and their governing officers were appointed by decree. In effect, the functions of the unions were restricted to the execution of corporative decisions and the nomination of delegates to the mixed social committee.

The cornerstone of the corporative structure envisaged by the Labor Charter was a new organization, the mixed social committee. This was a tripartite committee, consisting of representatives of the employers, the salary-earners and the wage-earners. The mixed social committee was the only body authorized to take under advisement all questions on working conditions. Thus the unions were barred from direct negotiations with the employers. Their power was

further reduced by provision that all nominations to the mixed social committee had to be approved by the management. The mixed social committee itself was restricted to a purely advisory role; the final decision belonged in all cases to the management. Provision was made for the social committees to own a "professional patrimony", which would enable them to finance some insurance schemes and welfare work.

The mixed social committees were to be formed in each enterprise employing more than twenty-five men. Local social committees were to unite the delegates from the same "professional family" in a given area. A hierarchy of local, regional, and national social committees was to be established for the thirty "professional families" into which French economy was divided.

The Vichy regime has been unable to win the support of the workers for the Labor Charter or to break their opposition to it. As a result the Charter has never become a working reality. Only 1,300 single unions are claimed to exist, and only 6,000 social committees. The obstructionist tactics pursued by a majority of the old unions have been supplemented by sabotage of the new organizations

carried on by the trade union underground.

C. Obligatory Labor Service

In 1942, in response to German demands for the mobilization of French manpower in support of the German war effort, Vichy introduced conscription of labor. All men from 16 to 60 years of age, and all women from 18 to 45, have been subject to draft for work judged by the government to be of "national importance." Employment and dismissals were made subject to the approval of local representatives of the Commissioner General for Manpower. In addition, two years' labor service has been made compulsory for young men after they reach the age of 20. The German authorities not only supervise this Vichy-instituted conscription of labor, but also make direct requisitions of French labor, sometimes submitting demands to local French authorities, sometimes using their own military forces to round up workers.

The Germans are using French manpower to support the German war effort both in France and in Germany. It is estimated that there are about 800,000 French workers in Germany.

The program of forced labor for Germany has met with the fiercest opposition. Many workers have taken refuge with guerilla bands operating in inaccessible country; others have secured false identity papers and changed their job and residence. Hundreds of thousands of French workers are living in illegality of one sort or another to escape forced labor in Germany.

D. Wages and Hours

Vichy has strengthened the measures for strict government control of wages and hours instituted during 1939-1940. The forty-hour week has not been officially suppressed, but the Minister of Labor may at his discretion extend the number of working hours to fifty-four, and overtime pay rates apply only to work over and above forty-eight hours. Vacations with pay have not been discontinued.

Some increases in wages have been granted, but these have been totally insufficient to keep pace with the rising cost of living. The decline in real wages was estimated at 40 percent in 1943. This wage policy was partly the result of the reduction in the available supply of consumers' goods, and partly

dictated by the Germans, who hoped thereby to attract French labor to Germany.

E. Workmen's Compensation

Under a law passed on 1 July 1938 (see Journal Officiel, 2 July 1938) every employee is entitled to compensation for industrial accidents and occupational diseases; in case of death due to these causes, his family was entitled to compensation. The cost was born entirely by the employers, who might ensure their risks with the National Accident Insurance Fund.

Vichy has somewhat increased the benefits established under the 1938 law. However, there has not been any effective application of the law. In September 1943 the Minister of Labor expressed the hope that the majority of those entitled to benefits under the law would shortly receive them.

F. The Peasant Corporation

Parallel to the corporative organization projected for labor, Vichy has projected a "Peasant Corporation" for agriculture. Farmers were to be united in local and regional unions, which were to replace all previously existing agricultural associations. A parallel structure united agricultural

producers according to the nature of the product in "specialized groups", which were in turn combined in "corporative federations". Representatives of all these organizations formed the "National Corporative Council of Agriculture". The whole structure was called the Peasant Corporation. At every level responsibility was vested in a single representative (syndic), according to the "leadership principle" of fascist ideologies.

Theoretically, the function of the Peasant Corporation was to assist the Minister of Agriculture in the formulation and execution of agricultural policy, to manage all farm cooperatives and insurance schemes, and to conduct all rural education and professional agricultural instruction. In practice, the control exercised by the Minister of Agriculture, who is also president of the Corporation, over nominations to all important positions in the organization has made it primarily a useful tool in the hands of the Minister for securing the execution of the government's policy on food production, food requisitions, and price and wage control.

V. SOCIAL INSURANCE

A. Social Insurance under the Third Republic

Under the Third Republic the main social insurance scheme was based on a single payment which simultaneously ensured sickness, maternity, disablement, old age, and death benefits. There was a special scheme for agricultural workers and for some other categories. Common to all schemes were the principles of: (1) compulsory insurance for all employed persons whose annual income did not exceed 30,000 francs (apart from some unimportant exempted categories) (2) a worker's contribution based on a percentage of his pay and deducted at the source; (3) an employer's contribution equal to the worker's contribution; (4) a state subsidy; and (5) individual choice between membership in a Friendly Society or a State fund. The scheme was administered through local autonomous approved mutual benefit societies, affiliated with a single departmental insurance fund, and supervised by the Ministries of Labor and Finance.

B. Social Insurance under Vichy

Vichy has extended the scope of compulsory social insurance by raising the wage-limit for inclusion

in the scheme to 42,000 francs a year and by including all workers on a piece-rate basis whatever their income. It has also liberalized the payment of benefits by abolishing the former prerequisite of having paid a minimum number of contributions. Old age pensions were based on a fixed minimum benefit instead of a proportion of the former salary.

There has also been a trend to increase the control exercised by the central government at the expense of the autonomous mutual-benefit societies. All old-age-insurance funds were consolidated into a single "General Pensions Fund". The local benefit societies have been made to some extent dependent on a central fund managed by the Ministries of Finance and Labor, which underwrites local benefit-societies and pays the extra costs incurred under the new legislation.

Theoretically, under the Vichy Labor Charter, all insurance schemes were to be brought under the authority of the mixed social committees. Similarly agricultural insurance was entrusted to the projected corporative agricultural organizations and placed under the Ministry of Agriculture. This attempt at

coordination of social insurance by the state has proved to be largely abortive, due to the ineffectuality of the corporative organizations.

VI. PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

A. Unemployment Relief

Unemployment was never covered by the compulsory insurance scheme. There were state-subsidized voluntary insurance schemes operated by trade unions and professional associations, but they never covered more than 200,000 workers. Unemployment relief was distributed through communal and departmental unemployment relief funds, subsidized by a national fund, and supervised by the Ministry of Labor.

Vichy has transferred the distribution of relief to the employment exchanges of the regional labor offices which can demand two hours' work a day from those receiving relief. The rates of relief have also been increased, in a gesture which the government could well afford since its policy has been to send all surplus labor to Germany.

B. Old Age Assistance

Under the Republic, the compulsory state insurance scheme included old age benefits. There was also a voluntary old age insurance system. In addition, indigents over 70 years of age could apply for relief to public assistance offices from which they either

received a pension or were placed in an institution for the aged.

By a law of 14 March 1941 (see Journal Officiel, 15 March 1941), Vichy established an old age pension which did not depend either on membership in an insurance scheme or on indigence. This reform had been long demanded and has been much emphasized in Vichy propaganda. In actuality, the pension was restricted to those who could prove five years of employment between the ages of fifty and sixty-five, and whose annual income, including the pension, did not exceed 9,000 francs (11,000 if married). Furthermore, the recipient was obliged not to undertake any paid work, except in agriculture.

C. Free Medical Care

Under the Republic, free medical care for the poor was administered through the local public assistance offices. The public assistance office paid expenses of physician, nurse, drugs, etc., and if necessary of hospitalization. The program was financed by departmental and communal subsidies, revenue from the poor tax, and private endowment.

Vichy has not altered this system.

VII. PUBLIC HOUSING PROGRAM

A. Housing under the Third Republic

Housing under the Third Republic made little actual progress until 1928, when a state-subsidized five-year building program of moderately priced dwellings was launched. By the end of the Third Republic, three types of public housing had been introduced: the habitations a bon marche, or low-cost units, administered by communal agencies and departmental public housing committees; the moderate-rent dwellings; and a middle category of improved low-cost housing. The program was administered by public and private housing agencies. In spite of these efforts, housing remained an acute problem. Sanitation was particularly poor.

B. Housing under Vichy

On paper, the Vichy government continued the housing program begun under the Third Republic and even launched new projects. A special commission financed by the state was put in charge of rebuilding war-damaged houses. An ambitious program of rural improvement was announced, including state-subsidies for farm construction, cultivation of waste land, and rural cooperatives. In 1943 this program was curtailed; government aid was virtually limited to the rebuilding of dilapidated farm

houses.

In actuality, under Vichy the housing situation has deteriorated sharply. The war has brought further destruction of houses, and the Germans have preempted the available supply of labor and materials. The Vichy housing program has for the most part consisted of promises and unrealized blueprints.

VIII. SPECIAL WAR MEASURES

A. Ex-Servicemen

Legislation for the benefit of ex-servicemen passed after the first World War provided for: (1) compensation and free medical attention for those who had been wounded; (2) pensions for disabled ex-servicemen and for widows and orphans; and (3) special assistance for all ex-servicemen in the form of relief grants and loans to enable them to purchase a house or establish themselves in business or agriculture.

Vichy has not made any basic changes in the legislation for ex-servicemen. However, a decree of October 1943, providing for the establishment of an organization of all veterans of the 1939-1940 campaign to ensure that they secured all the benefits accorded to veterans of the previous war, indicates that the new group of veterans had not yet received all these benefits.

Some increases in pension rates were announced in 1942 and 1944, no doubt as a result of the rise in the cost of living. The only innovation introduced by Vichy has been the provision for the compulsory reinstatement to their previous jobs of ex-servicemen demobilized for less than a year. At the same time employers

were obliged to hire a fixed proportion of demobilized men. Under the Labor Charter, vocational rehabilitation committees have been projected, to be attached to the social committees in each professional family.

The most ambitious effort of the Vichy regime with respect to ex-servicemen has been the organization of the Legion des Combattants, to replace all previous ex-servicemen's associations except those concerning themselves exclusively with welfare work. Although the Legion has functioned primarily as an instrument for promoting support for the regime, through its medical and social services, it has carried on extensive welfare work both for ex-servicemen and for other categories of the population.

B. Prisoners of War

The Germans took about 1,800,000 French prisoners in 1940. Of these about 800,000 have returned to France. Vichy has undertaken to aid war prisoners by organizing relief for prisoners in Germany and ex-prisoners in France, as well as for prisoners' families.

The work of the government in this field has been carried out through "Prisoners' Houses" established in every department, which act as a center for establishing contact between prisoners and their families, and for

sending supplies to the prison camps, as well as a social center for repatriated prisoners and prisoners' families. Various government agencies were set up to organize aid to the prisoners; these were coordinated in 1943 under the Commissariat General for War Prisoners (see Journal Officiel, 11 October 1943). Government action has been consistently ineffective, as well as saturated with pro-Vichy or pro-German propaganda. The only effective agency in the field was the French Red Cross.

Repatriated prisoners are included in the general provisions for the retraining and re-employment of ex-servicemen. A major problem has been that many prisoners return in such a weakened condition that they cannot resume their former work.

Until legislation published 20 July 1942, prisoners' families received only the military allowances fixed in 1939 which, in view of the rising cost of living, had fallen far below the minimum subsistence level. At that time Vichy introduced a somewhat higher scale. In addition, Vichy has promised preferential hiring of prisoners' wives, as well as some other advantages, such as rent reductions. In point of fact, a large proportion of the prisoners' families are suffering from acute poverty.

C. Evacuations

Large-scale evacuation of civilians was undertaken in 1943, partly as a result of German orders to clear strategic areas, partly to remove the populations from heavily bombed districts. Evacuations have sometimes been compulsory, and sometimes voluntary. Reception areas as well as evacuation areas were designated by the government. The local officials, especially the prefect of the department and the mayor of the commune, have been responsible for the evacuation and for the reception of the refugees at the other end. A large variety of private agencies have participated in organizing the evacuations and receptions; prominent among these have been the Secours National, the Red Cross and the Workers Committee for Immediate Help, which is a semi-political organization financed by the Germans. The work has been directed by government agencies; the direction of evacuations has been integrated with the civil defense system under the Ministry of the Interior. The evacuation of children by schools has been handled by the Ministry of National Education.

To encourage voluntary evacuations from designated areas, Vichy promised free transportation and daily allowances. The 1944 budget provided for an increase from 1.9 to 3 billion francs for these expenditures. Special efforts have been made for

the evacuation of children; whole schools were moved to safer regions; free medical attention and the supervision of social workers was promised.

It was estimated at the beginning of 1944 that over one and one half million persons had been evacuated. Evacuations on such a scale inevitably disorganize housing, food supply, transportation, education and other aspects of French life. The disorganization has been aggravated by the fact that the Germans ordered more evacuations than the feeble Vichy state could handle, with the result that government promises of free transportation, free storage of evacuees belongings, etc., could not be kept. Nor could Vichy obtain the necessary cooperation from the population of the evacuation and reception areas.

IX. CONCLUSION: POST-LIBERATION PROBLEMS

After the liberation of France, the operation of the public welfare system will present certain problems, as a result of the reorganization effected under the Vichy regime.

(1) Many government bodies and semi-official organizations established by Vichy are identified with the regime to such an extent and are so unpopular that they can hardly be expected to continue to be effective agencies after the dissolution of the regime. This is true, for example, of the agencies implementing the Labor Charter, the Peasant Corporation, and the Obligatory Labor Service Program.

(2) The personnel of all public and private welfare agencies, especially those in key positions, has been subjected to discriminatory measures in favor of those considered reliable by the regime. Many welfare officers may be hostile to the Allied cause and unpopular with the people.

(3) In some fields French public opinion is likely to favor a cancellation of the Vichy legislation and a return to the situation prevailing under the Third Republic. This is most likely to be true in the case

of Vichy labor legislation, which the majority of French workers regard as reactionary and repressive.

(4) It is believed that French public opinion after liberation will emerge stronger than it was before in support of State responsibility for individual welfare. It is likely that public opinion will favor the retention of certain measures introduced by Vichy (for example, the old-age pensions), and will demand their effective implementation. It is also likely that further social security measures will be demanded as permitted by the recovery of the country.